

HELLO I AM MICHAEL SHERRARD FROM
SHELBY,

ORIGINALLY IT WAS PLANNED TO FILL THE
FIRST TWO ROWS OF THIS ROOM WITH 9-10-11
YEAR OLDS AND EQUIP THEM WITH MOCK
FIREARMS TO DEMONSTRATE ~~W~~ARNING THIS
COMMITTEE MEETING THE ATTENTION SPAN OF
THIS AGE GROUP. AS A FATHER AND
GRANDFATHER I COULD SEE NO BENEFIT IN
PUTTING CHILDREN IN A POSITION OF
GUARANTEED FAILURE. IT WOULD NOT BE "IF"
BUT "WHEN" A MOCK FIREARM WOULD
INADVERTENTLY BE POINTED AT THEMSELVES
OR SOME-ONE-ELSE IN THIS ROOM. USING
CHILDREN FOR DEMONSTRATION BENEFITS OR
PERSONAL GAIN IS TOTALLY IMMORAL, THE
ABUSE OF THE "DADDY TAGS" ALSO FALLS IN
THIS CATEGORY.

IN THE WORDS OF JAPANESE ADMIRAL
HEROMOTO AFTER THE BOMBING OF PEARL
HARBOR "WE HAVE AWOKEN A SLEEPING
DRAGON" HB 613 AND THE ATTEMPT TO
PROVIDE "DADDY" TAGS THROUGH 9-10-11

YEAR OLDS IS JUST BEGINNING, TO BE DISCUSSED OVER KITCHEN TABLES, SINCE LAST SATURDAY. GRANDMOTHERS, MOTHERS AND GREAT GRANDMOTHERS ARE BEGINNING TO SEE RED ON THIS SELFISH ATTEMPT TO USED MONTANA'S MOST PRECIOUS GEMS "OUR YOUTH".

I WAS BROUGHT TO TASK BY A *GREAT* GRANDMOTHER YESTERDAY, WITH AN ANCIENT EXPRESSION. A DUSTER WAS AN IMPLEMENT MADE FROM WILLOWS THAT REMOVED DIRT AND DUST FROM THROW RUGS PRIOR TO ELECTRICITY AND VACUUM CLEANERS. HOMESTEADERS WOULD HANG THE RUGS AND BEGIN BEATING FROM THE BOTTOM SIDE TO REMOVE DUST AND DIRT. SHE STATED "I NEED TO GET MY DUSTER AND DUST SOME LEVIS IN HELENA" OBVIOUSLY SHE WAS VERY UNHAPPY ABOUT HB 613. WHEN YOU CAUSE THIS AMOUNT OF ANGER IN MONTANA LADIES WHO SUPPORT HUNTING AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES THE FALLOUT OF THIS IRRESPONSIBLE BILL AND THE ATTEMPT TO USE CHILDREN FOR

SELFISH ENDS WILL BE A FORCE TO RECONED WITH. IF HB 613 WERE TO VOTED ON NOW BY THE HOUSE THE RESULTS WOULD BE PREDICTABLY REVERSED. ON THE SURFACE IT GIVES YOU THE WARM FUZZY FEELING, NOW WHEN IT IS EXPOSED PARENTS AND STUDENTS ALIKE ARE NOT HAPPY WITH THE PREDICTABLE FUTURE HEADLINES AND THE FODDER FOR ANITHUNTING SENTIMENT. AS INSTRUCTORS WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE FUTURE OF HUNTING LIES WITH THE 80 PERCENT OF THE NON-HUNTING POPULATION, BUT WHO IS INFLUENCED BY HUNTING ACTIVITIES. A NONHUNTING MOTHER AND EDITOR IN BUTTE WAS IRATE ON THIS ATTEMPT TO PUT CHILDREN AT RISK WITH OR WITHOUT HUNTER EDUCATION.

ENOUGH OF THIS, PERHAPS I AM A LIVING DINOSAUR WHO ENJOYS PLANTING SEEDS OF HUNTING IN OUR FUTURE YOUTH. MY WIFE HAS CALLED ME AN OLD FOSSIL. MAYBE WE SHOULD LOOK TO THE FUTURE.

I AM TOLD THAT WE CANNOT GET YOUTH INTERESTED IN HUNTING BECAUSE OF COMPUTERS AND SOCCER.

IN MONTANA WE SELL TAGS OVER THE INTERNET, HAVE ESTABLISHED HUNTER AND BOWHUNTER CERTIFICATION CLASSES ON THE INTERNET SO INTERESTED PARTIES CAN USE THEIR COMPUTERS.

RANCHERS AND FARMERS ARE LOOKING TO CORRECT THEIR BOTTOM LINE. IT IS DIFFICULT WHEN YOU MEET 100 TRUCKS CARRYING CATTLE FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES COMPETING WITH MONTANA RAISED BEEF AND WE CAN IMPORT GRAIN FROM FRANCE TO CALIFORNIA CHEAPER THAN MONTANA GRAIN.

LETS HAVE PROFESSIONAL VIDEO COMPANIES PRODUCE HUNTING SCENARIOS ON VARIOUS FARMS AND RANCHES, WITH ALL SPIES OF BIRDS AND MAMMALS TO BE HUNTED ON LINE. THE STUDENTS CAN THEN TAKE HUNTER ED AND BOWHUNTER ED ONLINE, PURCHASE PROPER TAGS, SELECT EQUIPMENT, WEATHER, TIME AND SPECIES TO BE HUNTED

AND THE LOCATIONS FOR THE HUNT TO TAKE PLACE WHILE WATCHING SOCCER. VARIOUS SCENARIOS WOULD LEAD THE HUNTERS "MOUSE" THROUGH THE CHASE. IF THE HUNTER CHOOSE TO HARVEST THE ANIMAL A PICTURE WOULD BE SENT FOR A NOMINAL FEE, OF COURSE A FEE WOULD BE CHARGED TO THE HUNTER FOR THE HUNT. IT WOULD BE A WIN WIN SITUATION FOR ALL INVOLVED. IT WOULD BE BLOOD LESS, NO BIRDS OR ANIMALS WOULD DIE. THE STATE WOULD GET HUNTING NUMBERS UP, REVENUE WOULD INCREASE TO FISH WILDLIFE AND PARKS, FARMERS AND RANCHERS WOULD RECEIVE A PERCENTAGE OF THE INCOME FROM EACH HUNT. MOST IMPORTANT WE COULD THEN LICENSE 4-5-6 YEAR OLDS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE COMPUTER ACTIVITIES SINCE NO BIRDS OR ANIMALS WOULD BE KILLED.

IS THIS WHAT WE WANT FOR A HUNTING HERITAGE AND A LIVING LEGACY IN MONTANA. WE MAY DISAGREE WHAT COLOR TO WEAR ON ST PATTIES DAY, BUT PUTTING

OUR YOUTH IN A GUARANTEED POSITION OF FAILURE AND THE SEVERE CONSEQUENCES RESULTING THEREOF, IS A POOR CHOICE FOR RESPONSIBLE LEGISLATION.

HB 613 CANNOT STAND ON ITS OWN MERIT AND ALL TYPES OF AMENDMENTS ONLY SERVE TO IDENTIFY THE GREEDY NATURE AND TRUE REASONS OF THIS UNPOPULAR AND DEVASTATING BILL.

THE VAST MAJORITY OF MONTANANS ARE TRULY NOT AWARE OF THIS PEARL HARBOR ATTACK ON OUR YOUTH. REACTION TO NEWS REPORTS ARE BEGGING TO SURFACE. 99% ARE TOTALLY UNFAVORABLE TO HB 613.

I WOULD ASK YOU TO NOT PASS ANY VERSION OF HB 613 THANK YOU.

Michael D. Shaver
Shelby MT.

Christopher and Deborah Leichter
PO Box 503
Sunburst, MT. 59482
(406) 937-6900
leich44@northemtel.net

March 14, 2007

State of Montana
Re: House Bill 613

Dear Sir or Madam:

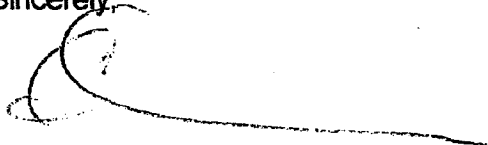
In regards to House Bill 613 I would like to comment on the age limit proposed in this bill. My immediate family and I consist of 5 hunters. The ages of these hunters are 48, 46, 24, 14 and 13. I have been personally hunting for 34 years. I started when I was 12. I remember back long ago when my brothers, father and myself would go out for a long weekend of hunting. Those were some of the best times of my life. Those times, and the education that I received from my father and my older brothers, allow me to teach my children now.

I can say without hesitation that while being 12 years old when I first started hunting and knowing how to fire a rifle and handgun with complete accuracy I was not the safest person to be around. This was due solely to my age. It had nothing to do with anything else. It's pure and simple. At that young age we all should know that there is, and always will be, much more to learn about safety, responsibility, care of people around us and life in general.

I now read through a document presented to myself and my wife, Deborah Leichter, a Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Hunter Safety Instructor herself, and am in complete awe about how someone could possibly consider implementing such a preposterous idea of letting children younger than 12 years old, namely 9, 10 and 11 year old children take on such a responsibilities.

I urge you to either reconsider this proposal or to dismiss this proposal altogether. Children of this age should be taught firearms safety, be led through the possible dangers of firearms and be taught proper firearms handling well before actually letting them go out hunting. The current age of 12 years old, although still young, is more of an acceptable age for introduction to actual hunting. The attention span of a 9, 10 or 11 year old, as we all know, is not that long. Giving a firearm to a young person with such a short attention span is inviting an accident. Such an accident would be tragic but very much preventable by denying this proposal. These accidents happen at any age. We hear and experience these types of tragedies all of the time. Once again, I urge you to dismiss this preposterous proposal.

Sincerely,



Christopher L. Leichter

Sr. LAN Administrator
Apogen Technologies/Dept. of Homeland Security

Sweetgrass Port of Entry
Sweetgrass, MT. 59484

P O Box 722
Sunburst, MT 59482

14 March 2007

Montana Senate Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Committee
State Capital Building
Helena, MT 59601

RE: HB 613

Honorable Gentlemen and Ladies,

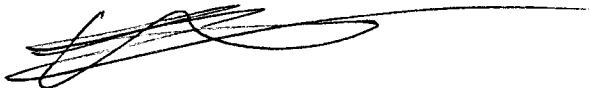
I urge you to reconsider and not forward HB 613 "An Act Providing Limited License and Hunting Privileges for Youth 9-11 Years of age." I believe the Sponsor has presented this bill under false pretenses and would not benefit the citizens of Montana. This bill is an accident waiting to happen. For all the proposed gain in income, the undetermined expenses of lawsuits, added time for licensing agents, added time for enforcement officials, and other miscellaneous expenses that have not been forecast will deplete this gain. Further, the added hazards associated with untrained, potentially unsupervised underage hunters will potentially cause a decrease in hunters, as they fear going into certain areas.

I can understand the desire to increase revenue and to enjoy the benefits of the tourism this bill initially projects. However, I feel a better way to gain these benefits would be to review and correct current legislation limiting access and expanding certain seasons.

I have enjoyed hunting in Montana in the past and have looked forward to taking my children hunting after they have been properly introduced to the handling of firearms. Personally, having watched the children in my kids' age groups handle even toy weapons, I cannot imagine being in the field with some of them without them having attended training. As mentioned above, this would be an accident waiting to happen.

Again, I ask you to reconsider the HB 613 and not allow it to proceed to the floor. I believe this bill has been put forward under false pretense and would not benefit the citizens of Montana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul E Hester", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Paul E Hester

3/14/07

To Whom It May Concern:

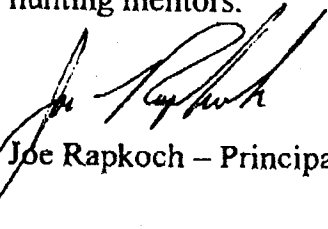
I would like to express my opposition to H.B. 613, that would allow 9 year old children to hunt birds and big game, when accompanied by an adult.

As an educator and a graduate of Montana's Hunter's Safety program, I cannot easily envision the thought of putting a high-powered rifle or shotgun into the hands of a 9 year old boy or girl, and expect them to be held in a responsible light. The thought is actually kind of scary.

Secondly, I think the proposal smacks with potential abuse; not from the children, so much, but from the adults who are "accompanying" the 9 year old. Worse things have happened than allowing the child to become a scapegoat for poaching, but we don't have to create the potential for such abuse of the laws.

Too, I don't think circumventing the Hunter's Safety program until they reach 12 years of age is fair to the child and to the other hunters. It would be somewhat of a two-edged message: You're o.k. to hunt from 9 to 11, but you'll have to jump through the usual 'hoops' when you turn 12.

Careful consideration should be given to this measure, and I don't think that it is wise to let the younger children have responsibilities their young minds are not ready to handle. Continue to let them be 'bird dogs', as I was at that age, and leave the shooting and the harvesting up to the adults that are their hunting mentors.

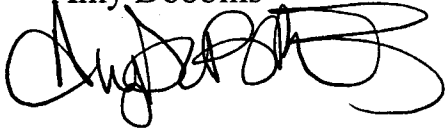


Joe Rapkoch – Principal, Shelby Elementary School

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a mother of two boys. My oldest boy will be taking Hunters Ed this year. He is ready for the responsibility of carrying a gun while hunting with his dad. My youngest son who is 9 in my opinion is not ready to carry a gun while hunting with his dad. Even If Hunters Education is offered.

Thank you,
Amy Dobbins

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Dobbins', written over the printed name.

To: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

I am a 44 yr old Montana resident. I have been an avid big game and bird hunter all my life. I have raised my 2 sons to enjoy hunting as well. Both of them went through and completed the Hunter Education Program. I feel by completing this program my sons were better educated by the instructors on proper gun handling. As a parent I do not believe all 9, 10 or 11 year olds should be handling high powered guns without completing the proper training. I would not allow my sons to hunt at 9 years old.

I do not support or agree with HB613.

Thank You

Tom D. Smith

TO: Montana Fish, Wildlife + Parks

I do not support or agree with
HB 613.

Thank you
Michaela Smith
Sunburst, MT 59482

I am opposed to bill HB 613. We have three boys, & one that is about to turn 12 and is going to take hunters safety. Our second child is nine, & we wouldn't dream of letting him handle a rifle without hunters safety. It is too dangerous to let a child handle a big game rifle, without learning safety first.

Desiree Vacker

I am opposed to HB 613, as I feel that a 9 yr. old is too young to handle a big game rifle. Instructions or not. Safety, or stupidity, what's your choice?
John Sumner

As a mother of three, and a
grandmother of eight, of which two are nine
years old. I am very much opposed to
HB 613. My Son and Son-in-laws are avid
hunters, and would not take their 9 yr olds
hunting, without first taking Hunters Safety. A
nine year old is not physically or mentally
ready to handle a big game rifle. Let's be
Safe, and not Sorry.

Nancy Simmes